

108TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 2280

To establish a coordinated national ocean exploration program within the  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 5, 2004

Mr. STEVENS (for himself, Mr. HOLLINGS, and Mr. INOUE) introduced the  
following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on  
Commerce, Science, and Transportation

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## A BILL

To establish a coordinated national ocean exploration pro-  
gram within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-  
ministration.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “National Ocean Explo-  
5       ration Program Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT.**

7       The Secretary of Commerce, through the Adminis-  
8       trator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-  
9       tration, shall, in consultation with the National Science

1 Foundation and other appropriate Federal agencies, es-  
2 tablish a coordinated national ocean exploration program  
3 within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-  
4 tion.

5 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

6 The purposes of the program are the following:

7 (1) To explore the physical, biological, chemical,  
8 geological, archaeological, temporal, and other re-  
9 lated characteristics of the oceans to benefit, inform,  
10 and inspire the American people.

11 (2) To create missions and scientific activities  
12 of discovery that will improve our understanding, ap-  
13 preciation, and stewardship of the unique marine  
14 ecosystems, organisms, chemistry, and geology of the  
15 world's oceans, and to enhance knowledge of sub-  
16 merged maritime historical and archaeological sites.

17 (3) To facilitate discovery of marine natural  
18 products from these ecosystems that may have po-  
19 tential beneficial uses, including those that may help  
20 combat disease or provide therapeutic benefits.

21 (4) To communicate such discoveries and  
22 knowledge to policymakers, regulators, researchers,  
23 educators, and interested nongovernmental entities  
24 in order to support policy decisions and to spur ad-  
25 ditional scientific research and development.

1           (5) To maximize effectiveness by integrating  
2           multiple scientific disciplines, employing the diverse  
3           resources of the ocean science community, and mak-  
4           ing ocean exploration data and information available  
5           in a timely and consistent manner.

6           (6) To achieve heightened education, environ-  
7           mental literacy, public understanding and apprecia-  
8           tion of the oceans.

9   **SEC. 4. AUTHORITIES.**

10          In carrying out the program the Administrator of the  
11   National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall—

12           (1) conduct interdisciplinary exploration voy-  
13           ages or other scientific activities in conjunction with  
14           other Federal agencies or academic or educational  
15           institutions, to survey little known areas of the ma-  
16           rine environment, inventory, observe, and assess liv-  
17           ing and nonliving marine resources, and report such  
18           findings;

19           (2) give priority attention to deep ocean re-  
20           gions, with a focus on surveying deep water marine  
21           systems that hold potential for important scientific  
22           and medical discoveries, such as hydrothermal vent  
23           communities and seamounts;

24           (3) conduct scientific voyages to locate, define,  
25           and document historic shipwrecks, submerged sites,

1 and other ocean exploration activities that combine  
2 archaeology and oceanographic sciences;

3 (4) develop, in consultation with the National  
4 Science Foundation, a transparent process for re-  
5 viewing and approving proposals for activities to be  
6 conducted under this program;

7 (5) enhance the technical capability of the  
8 United States marine science community by pro-  
9 moting the development of improved oceanographic  
10 research, communication, navigation, and data col-  
11 lection systems, as well as underwater platforms and  
12 sensors;

13 (6) conduct public education and outreach ac-  
14 tivities that improve the public understanding of  
15 ocean science, resources, and processes, in conjunc-  
16 tion with relevant educational programs of the Na-  
17 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the  
18 National Science Foundation, and other agencies;

19 (7) accept donations of property, data, and  
20 equipment to be applied for the purpose of exploring  
21 the oceans or increasing knowledge of the oceans;  
22 and

23 (8) establish an ocean exploration forum to en-  
24 courage partnerships and promote communication  
25 among experts and other stakeholders in order to

1 enhance the scientific and technical expertise and  
2 relevance of the national program.

3 **SEC. 5. EXPLORATION TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUC-**  
4 **TURE TASK FORCE.**

5 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-  
6 tion, in coordination with the National Aeronautics and  
7 Space Administration, the U.S. Geological Survey, Office  
8 of Naval Research, and relevant governmental, non-gov-  
9 ernmental, academic, and other experts, shall convene an  
10 ocean technology and infrastructure task force to develop  
11 and implement a strategy—

12 (1) to facilitate transfer of new exploration  
13 technology to the program;

14 (2) to improve availability of communications  
15 infrastructure, including satellite capabilities, to the  
16 program;

17 (3) to develop an integrated, workable and com-  
18 prehensive data management information processing  
19 system that will make information on unique and  
20 significant features obtained by the program avail-  
21 able for research and management purposes; and

22 (4) to encourage cost-sharing partnerships with  
23 governmental and non-governmental entities that  
24 will assist in transferring exploration technology and  
25 technical expertise to the program.

1 **SEC. 6. INTERAGENCY FINANCING.**

2       The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-  
 3 tion, the National Science Foundation, and other Federal  
 4 agencies involved in the program, are authorized to par-  
 5 ticipate in interagency financing and share, transfer, re-  
 6 ceive and spend funds appropriated to any federal partici-  
 7 pant the program for the purposes of carrying out any  
 8 administrative or programmatic project or activity under  
 9 this section. Funds may be transferred among such de-  
 10 partments and agencies through an appropriate instru-  
 11 ment that specifies the goods, services, or space being ac-  
 12 quired from another Federal participant and the costs of  
 13 the same.

14 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

15       There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na-  
 16 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry  
 17 out the program—

- 18           (1) \$45,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2005  
 19       through 2010; and  
 20           (2) \$55,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011  
 21       through 2016.

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